

DISTRICT NEWS

Hamilton Jr. starts season off with safe run in Daytona Beach

PRESS RELEASE
MARINE CORPS RECRUITING COMMAND

For a driver with a passion for leading laps and winning races, the Hershey’s Kisses 300 brought a change of pace for Bobby Hamilton Jr.

Since last June, the White House, Tenn., resident has been a fixture in the front of the pack, dominating the NASCAR Busch Series. Hopefully that will be the case beginning next week in Rockingham, N.C. Since Saturday’s rain delayed NASCAR Busch Series season opener, Hamilton Jr. took a different approach to the race.

After qualifying in the 26th position, he decided to use a conservative strategy during the race and dropped to the back of the field.

The goal was to avoid the big, multi-car accidents that have become famous at Daytona.

The strategy worked to perfection as a lap 12 accident eliminated nine drivers from contention for the win. Hamilton Jr., with plenty of time to react to the accident, steered clear through the wreckage.

Soon after the accident, rain hit the 2.5-mile Daytona International Speedway, eventually postponing the race until Monday.

When action resumed on Monday, he stuck with his plan and managed to avoid a large multi-car accident on



TMR Photo

The #25 Team Marines Ford is ready to roll and driver Bobby Hamilton Jr. can’t wait to pick up where he left off last year. He finished 13th in the Daytona Monday.

lap 42. From that point forward, Hamilton Jr. began to charge forward and race his way into the lead pack.

Over the final half of the 120 lap race, Hamilton Jr. raced as high as fifth place, picking and choosing his

lines carefully in a race that was dominated by full-time Winston Cup drivers. A few close calls occurred



Sergeants Maj. Craig Brown (left) and Fenton Reese wear the blue overcoat and reinforced tanker jacket currently undergoing testing by Marine recruiters. The jackets feature quilted liners that add more warmth than the current models.

New winter coats undergo testing by local recruiters

SGT. JOHN NEAL
1ST MCD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

As temperatures in the northern parts of the country hover around single digits and blasts of wind plunge them well below zero, Marine recruiters patrol the streets prospecting for our Corps’ future in blue sweaters and thin tanker jackets.

It’s been five years in the making, but a warmer option for Marines on recruiting duty could be coming down the pike. Marines at Recruiting Stations Buffalo, N.Y., and Fargo, N.D., are testing three new coats and jackets for possible wear in the future.

Two items are already familiar to Marines – the tanker jacket and the all-weather coat – but with some upgrades to make them more durable in the cold. The tanker jacket and the all-weather coat undergoing testing by recruiters feature quilted liners that add more warmth than the current models being used. The item that is turning heads and winning the favor of Marine recruiters, though, is the blue overcoat, also known as the horseblanket.

RS Buffalo received 12 sets of the three coats for testing in November. The coats were distributed to the sergeant major, recruiter instructor, and 10 Marines at RSS Tonawanda and RSS West Seneca. In an area that averages 80 inches of snowfall annually and where temperatures fall to 25 degrees below zero, the blue overcoats have been a welcome change to current uniform options.

“Up until late December, the tanker jackets were getting the

most wear, but with the frigid weather that has hit us over the past five weeks, the horseblankets have been a godsend for the 12 recruiters that are trying them out,” said Capt. Daniel Colvin, RS Buffalo’s executive officer.

“I think they’re awesome,” said Staff Sgt. William Buckwalter, a recruiter at RSS West Seneca who is participating in the test. “They are the best things ever done for us out here.”

The navy blue coats are made of 100 percent wool, have a permanent inner liner, and wear like the all-weather coat. Gold buttons with the Marine emblem like those on the Blue Dress jacket decorate the double-breasted coat. The material and the weight of the coat keeps Marines warm by stopping the wind from cutting through, and the length keeps their legs warm. The coat also complements the Blue Dress uniforms and Marines like the professional look.

Buckwalter says civilians often approach him on the street to compliment him about the blue overcoat.

It’s a kind of conversation starter,” he said. “People come up to tell me it’s a nice coat, then I’ll ask what have they got going on. So it’s helped me in that aspect.”

While the majority of Marines going through the testing favor the overcoat, Staff Sgt. Jeremy Rodgers, SNCOIC of RSS Tonawanda, says he’s more partial to the reinforced tanker jacket because the overcoat is cumbersome getting in and out of vehicles. Rodgers finds the tanker jacket with the quilted liner provides sufficient warmth when outside and, yet, is still comfortable

when worn indoors.

“It’s not so big and bulky so when you go to someone’s house you don’t have to take it off and look for some place to lay it down.”

Though the overcoat is “very warm,” Rodgers says the wool material is also a magnet for lint and hair.

“If you go into somebody’s house and they have a pet, God help you.”

Sergeant Maj. Craig Brown, sergeant major of the 1st Marine Corps District, has been lobbying for new coats for recruiters in the northeast since 1999.

“It’s the right thing to do,” said Brown. “You wouldn’t send a Marine into combat without proper equipment. Some recruiters are working in extreme weather conditions. It’s not uncommon to see recruiters in frigid temperatures wearing only a tanker jacket and sweater.”

Tests will last for three months with surveys issued at 20-, 60- and 90-day marks. During the testing period, Marines will evaluate the new coats on a variety of factors including protection against the cold, durability, fit, appearance and overall performance. After testing is complete, the data will be sent to Marine Corps Recruiting Command for selection and approval.

Brown says he would like to see the new coats made available either as geographic-designated issue or optional purchase in the future.

“We need to push out the type of gear Marines need to do their mission in adverse weather conditions.”